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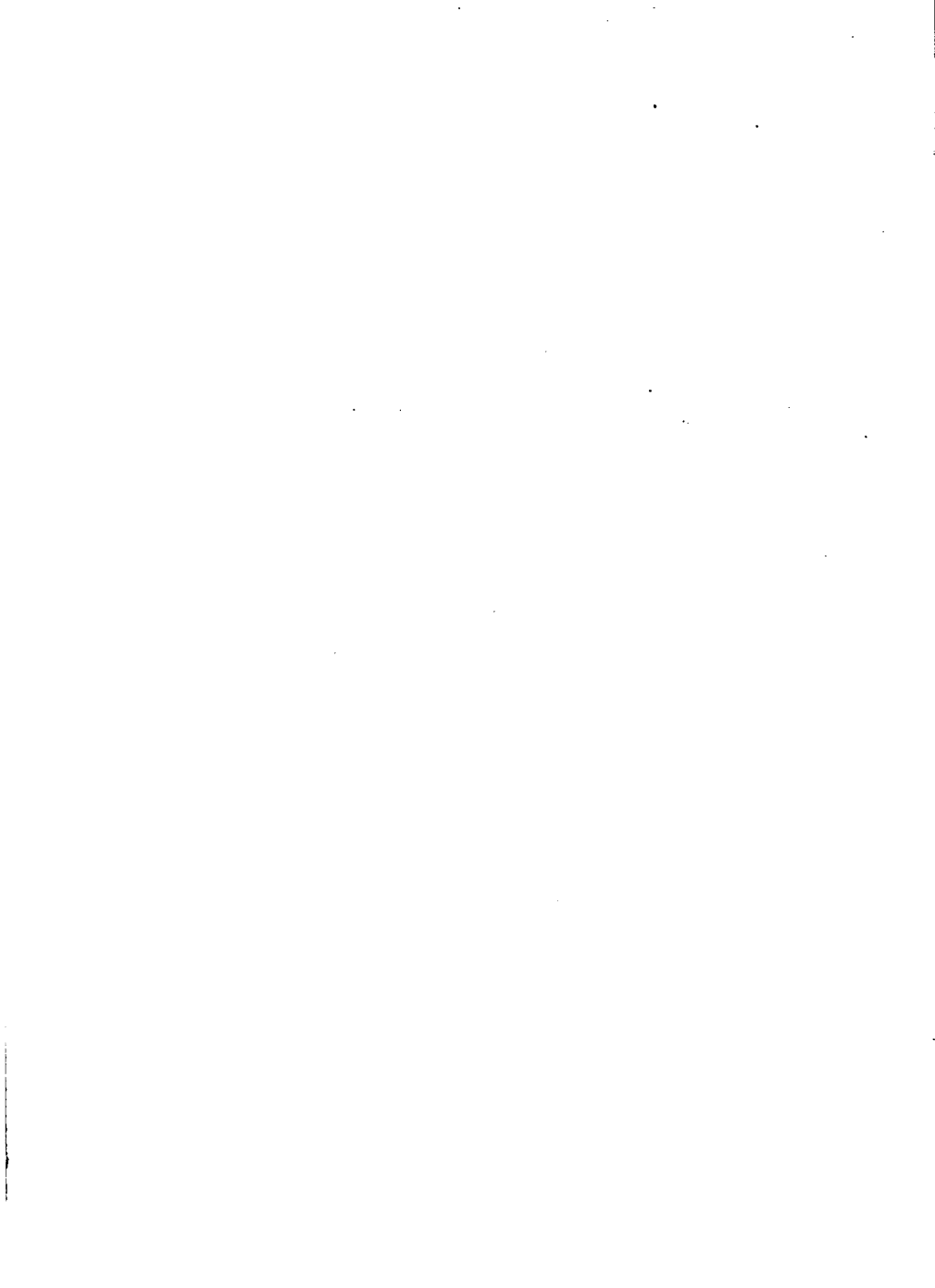
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Received Dec. 27, 1906.



LAYS OF THE ROUND TABLE

Uniform with this Volume

GWENEVERE

A LYRIC PLAY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

[Written in concert with Mr Vincent
Thomas's music, and played at the
Coronet Theatre, Nov. 13th, 1905]

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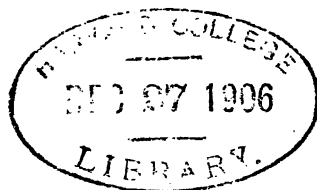
LAYS
OF THE
ROUND TABLE
AND OTHER LYRIC ROMANCES

BY
ERNEST RHYS



1905
LONDON
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DEDICATION

TO GRANIA, WITH THE ROSE OF OLD ROMANCE

*Dearest of women,—if this Rose be grown
Red in late autumn, claim it for your own !
This is the flower that breathed on Camelot
Undying perfume ; whose fine arrows, shot
Across the vacant dark and gape of time,
Found the White Doe there in her faerie clime ;
And this the Rose whose blood fulfilled the Grail,
Whose thorns were sharp, whose stem encased in mail
Was Arthur's,—armed his purple crest with fear,
And with one petal made all Gwenevere.
If it be said, the blossoms of that tree
Their summer past, have no eternity,
It is not true. Great Love, imperilled, is
Still a knight errant on the hills and seas,
And you, whose guerdon now, these three years gone—
Dire years,—I won in fear, and still warred on,
Know how the Tree of Arthur and its flower
Were still my solace in the insatiate hour ;—
Know how we too sustained the Dolorous Stroke,*

v

*Met the fell wind that full on Barendown broke,
With Columbe died, fought at the Peron stone
And at the last, when all our wars were done
And we left wounded, sailed to Avalon.
What more of hope and woe made red this Rose,
None but the secret dream of Grania knows,
That drained the Cup of Trembling, and renewed
With woman's sorrow Avalon's magic rood,
And from the piteous dust long buried there
Lifted this flower, to live and bloom for her.*

September 24, 1905

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF	1
TRUE LOVE	2
THE SONG OF DINADAN, AND THE REFRAIN OF LA BELLE ISOUD	4
THE LADY CALLED "WHITE HANDS"	6
THE BATTLE OF THE TWO KNIGHTS: OR THE LAY OF THE PERON-STONE, AND THE REFRAIN OF THE DEAD LADY, COLUMBE, WHO LOVED THE KING OF IRELAND'S SON	7
ALICE LA BELLE PILGRIM	13
THE BIRDS OF RHIANNON	15
THE RING OF TRUE LOVE	16
THE SONG OF DAGONET	18
THE TWO FOOLS (Dagonet's Song)	19
THE LAY OF KING MARK	21
THE WISDOM OF KING SOLOMON	23
THE SERMON OF THE GENTLEWOMAN THE WHICH WAS SISTER TO SIR PERCIVALE; SHEWING TO SIR GALAHAD THE VIRTUE OF THE SWORD	25
THE DOLOROUS STROKE	28
THE LAY OF SURLUSE	29
THE WONDER-DREAM	34

	PAGE
THE SONG OF THE FOUR KNIGHTS . . .	36
THE QUEST OF THE GRAIL: ON THE EVE . . .	39
THE CITY OF SARRAS . . .	41
SIR LAUNCELOT AND THE SANCGREAL . . .	45
THE LAST SLEEP OF SIR LAUNCELOT . . .	49
THE LAMENT OF SIR ECTOR DE MARIS . . .	51
TIMOR MORTIS . . .	54
THE SONG OF THE SEVEN CANDLES . . .	56
THE LAY THAT HAD NO END . . .	60
THE UNFINISHED BOOK OF BLEISE . . .	62
ARTHUR'S GRAVE: THE EPITAPH . . .	63
THE CASTLE SPEAKS . . .	64
THE SONG OF THE APPLE . . .	66
ST DAVID AND THE SORROWS . . .	68
THE FLOWER MAIDEN . . .	71
KERI'S DAUGHTER . . .	72

GRANIA'S ROMANCE-BOOK

I. THE ROSES OF KNOCKADOON . . .	81
II. THE CHAMBER OF ECSTASY . . .	84
III. MORNING LIGHT . . .	86
IV. THE WONDER OF THE WORLD . . .	87
V. TO GRANIA IN IRELAND . . .	91
VI. MAIDEN-WOOD . . .	93
VII. L'ENVOI: THE MIRROR OF ROMANCE . . .	94

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF

WINTER and his blast
Cause a man to cower,
And by the winter-fire sit fast
Many an hour.

But May and her sweet kind,
Sweet flower and fresh leaf,
Burgeon in a sad man's mind—
End his grief.

Then,—for oh, how brief
Is his burgeoning,—
With the Flower and the Leaf
Let him sing.

TRUE LOVE

LIKE as herb and tree in May
Flourish from the root,
Every lusty heart must rise,
And start to love, and fare likewise,—
Flower first, then fruit.

For he giveth courage then
That lusty month of May,—
He calls to mind what true love is,
Old service and old gentleness,
Forgot upon the way.

For, know you, never worshipful
Man nor woman neither,
But each loved the other well,
More than anyone can tell
Each one loving either.

Such love I call virtuous love ;
But now men, nowadays,
Cannot love,—not seven night,
But they must have all love's delight,
Fruit and grace.

2

Hasty heat,—it cooleth soon,
All its love soon told :
Winter rasure soon doth rase
Summer ;—so is love these days,
Soon hot, soon cold !

This is no stability :
The old love was not so :
Men would love for seven year,
In loving truth and tender fear,
And wantonness not know.

Call to your remembrance then,
The joyous month of May,
And call up True Love to you here,
Who while she lives, loves very dear,
And loves the same alway.

THE SONG OF DINADAN,
AND THE REFRAIN OF LA BELLE ISOUD

[From "Gwenevere" a Lyric Play.]

"I MARVEL much," said Dinadan,
"What madness knights may know,
That follow love like Sir Tristan,
And find it bitter woe."

"Ab!" said La Belle Isoud, "say not so!"

"But think," said he, "of Sir Tristan,
Besotted many a year!
As joyous once as Dinadan—
He has bought thy love too dear."

"Ab!" said La Belle Isoud, "say not so!"

"What ails then all their knightly sport,
That love should change their song?
For the joy of love is all too short,
And the sorrow far too long."

Ab!" said La Belle Isoud, "say not so!"

THE SONG OF DINADAN

5

"The joy of love is all too brief,
And very long the woe :
For joy's the flower, but love, the leaf,
Endures that saw it go."

"Ah!" said La Belle Isoud, "say not so!"

THE LADY CALLED "WHITE HANDS:"

"THAT good love with which I loved you
Belle Isoud, has cost me lands,—
Cost me lands and lost me castles,
And the love of your sweet namesake
Of the Lady called 'White Hands.'

"Lands and loves have I forsaken,
All for love of her that stands
Now a traitress in her beauty,—
Belle Isoud, that made me traitor
To the Lady called 'White Hands.'"

* * * * *

What sorrow did Sir Tristan make,—
He mourned for love, not loss of lands,—
He mourned for sake of Belle Isoud;
But who shall sorrow for the sake
Of the Lady called "White Hands"?

THE BATTLE OF THE TWO KNIGHTS :
OR THE LAY OF THE PERON-STONE,
AND THE REFRAIN OF THE DEAD
LADY, COLUMBE, WHO LOVED THE
KING OF IRELAND'S SON

I

WHAT horseman, bound for Camelot,
Halts at the Peron-stone,
Where Balin slew Sir Lanceor
The King of Ireland's son :
Where Columbe sleeps, who could not bear
Her love should lie alone.

*Oh Columbe, lady Columbe,
There liest thou with thy love :
You little think of them that ride
And shake the earth above.*

II

Is it Sir Tristan halts his horse,
And stays his trampling pride,

8 LAY OF THE PERON-STONE

To ponder on the Peron-stone
Where you lie side by side?
Oh, now he sees another Knight
Against him set to ride.

III

The new Knight has a snow-white shield,
And helm and hauberk white:
Sir Tristan's soul grows great in him,
To see so great a knight:
He lifts his heart, and cries on high,—
“Ye be most welcome, Knight!”

IV

They wheel, they set, they dress their spears,
And holding, hurling on,
They drive; they thrust so fierce together
That horse and man are overthrown,—
They bruise the green life from the grass,
Beside the Peron-stone.

*Oh Columbe, lady Columbe,
There liest thou with thy love,—
You little think of them that ride
And shake the earth above.*

V

The knights avoid their horses ;
They put their shields before :
They strake together with bright swords,
Belike four hours and more :
The blood fell red on the green grass,—
So wonderly they strake, and sore.

VI

Their Squires cry out for pity :
Cried Gouvernail: "What blows
Are they my master deals to thine!"
"And what fierce buffets those
He takes of mine!" the other said,—
"What he endures, God knows!"

VII

"O Knight!" cried out that other,—
"Thou fightest wonderly,—
Tell me thy name!" "First tell me thine,
And I will so to thee!"
"But mine is Lancelot du Lake ;
Now knightly tell thine me!"

*[Oh Columbe, lady Columbe,
There liest thou with thy love,—
But little think of them that ride,
And shake the earth above.]*

VIII

“O Lancelot,” then Tristan said,—
“What ill thing have I done?
Ye are the one man I do love,
The best, the knightliest one!”
“But tell me then,” said Lancelot,—
“By what name thou art known?”

IX

“Sir Tristan I, of Lyonesse;
If thou art Lancelot,
Then all that honour I have won,
And all my deeds are naught:
Now men shall say, behold the knight
That with his best friend fought.”

X

Then each to other knelt there
And yielded up his sword:

And each one yielded the degree
In honour's dear accord,
Then rose, and on the Peron-stone
Each sat, and kissed his lord.
*Oh Columbe, lady Columbe,
There liest thou with thy love :
But little think of them that sit
The Peron-stone above.*

XI

Anon they rise, and from the stone
They take the road again,
To Camelot,—and knightly make
An honour of each stain :
And now they meet Sir Gaheris
And with him Sir Gawain.

XII

“We ride,” said they, “oh Lancelot,
Sir Tristan to discover !”
“Return then,” cries Sir Lancelot,—
“All your quest is over :
I have brought you Sir Tristan,—
Earth's most knightliest lover !”

XIII

Now in they fare, and King Arthur's ta'en
Sir Tristan at the door
With both his hands. But when he heard
How wonderly and sore
Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristan fought,—
Great dole he made therefore.

*Oh Columbe, lady Columbe,
There liest thou with thy love :
You little reck of them that ride
And shake the earth above.*

ALICE LA BELLE PILGRIM

"Then came Queen Morgan le Fay to Alisander, and bade him arise, and put him in a horse-litter, and gave him such a drink that in three days and three nights he waked never, but slept: and so she brought him to her own castle that at that time was called La Beale Regard."

"SIXTEEN wounds should slay a knight,
Alisander le Orphelin!

But where is the faery-leech shall say
If you will live till morning light?"

"Ask Morgan le Fay," said Alisander, "ask Morgan le Fay."

"The sixteenth wound is very deep,
Alisander le Orphelin,"

Said Morgan le Fay, "would you be whole,
Or are you ready for mortal sleep?"

"Who would be sick," said Alisander, "if he might be whole."

"If I search your wounds, and make you well,
Alisander le Orphelin,

Will you be mine?" said Morgan le Fay.

"I would if it were not for Alice la Belle—

"I dream of her," said Alisander, "dream of her
night and day."

"For Alice la Belle, steel glaives you need,
Alisander le Orphelin,

But you lie close in the linen-bands :

What shall she say, when your wounds do
bleed?"

"With her white hands," said Alisander, "bind
them with her hands!"

"But if it be I that make you well,
Alisander le Orphelin,

What of the fee of Morgan le Fay!"

"Earth and wild fire and Alice la Belle
Shall pay the fee," said Alisander, "Alice la Belle
shall pay."

THE BIRDS OF RHIANNON

O THE birds of Rhiannon
They sing time away,—
Seven years in their singing
Are gone like a day.

Eight score years are nothing
While they sing to men ;
But when their song's over,
Oh, woe to you then !

You shall know all the sorrow
You had to your cost,
All the loss,—yes, remember
All the friends you have lost !

THE RING OF TRUE LOVE

I WILL give you a ring, Sir Gareth,
 (Said the Lady of Lyonesse)
But how, in my heart, can I spare it?
If I wear it, my beauty increaseth,
 If I spare, it grows less.

This virtue it has too, Sir Gareth :
 (Said the Lady of Lyonesse)
To make a new knight in thy likeness
And to brightness turn shade, and lend honour
 A bright sword in the press.

And this virtue it has too, Sir Gareth,
 (Said the Lady of Lyonesse)
To turn dark into light, and make bright too
Dead of night, and arm the pale rider
 With the shield, Steadfastness.

Thy grace be the greater, Sir Gareth :

And my beauty be less.

This is love, that can suffer and bear it ;

Yes, for love's sake, lose all and forswear it !

Said the Lady of Lyonesse.

THE SONG OF DAGONET

ARTHUR's jester, heaven-born fool,
What folly brings you riding
Far away from Caerleön?—
While your feather in the pool
Nods and beckons to your hiding
Otherself that calls you on,—
Dagonet?

Leave the jousting! Break the quest!
Leave to Palamidés
The death-thrust by the heron-pool
At Glatisant the deathly beast.
All can fight as need is;
Only one can play the fool,—
Dagonet.

THE TWO FOOLS

(DAGONET'S SONG)

"... Then he ran thither and gat Sir
Dagonet by the head, and gave him such a
fall to the earth that he bruised him sore, so
that he lay still. . ."—*Morte Darthur* ix. xix.

THAT fool and I fool
Met together :
He wrast off my sword,
He brast my belt leather.

My bauble he broke,
He nigh had my head off,
And left me for dead,
As his mad way he led off.

That fool and I fool !
Wellnigh he had slain me ;
Struck dumb my five bells ;
With foul earth did stain me.

THE TWO FOOLS

What folly was his?
Love's melancholy?
But mine is of heav'n,—
Heaven-sent folly!

His folly is love's,
But mine is of heaven!
For one folly he has,
I have seven.

St Bridget send sun,
St Bran send the weather,
When that fool and I fool
Come next together.

THE LAY OF KING MARK

"And so the harpers went straight into
Wales and into Cornwall to sing the lay that
Sir Dinadan made of King Mark, which was
the worst lay that ever harper sang with
harp or with any other instruments."

Now King Mark rode beneath the leaf,
Unto a fountain in the green shade ;
When by there came Sir Lamorak,
And grievous the complaint he made,—
Great dolour, piteous grief.

He tied his horse unto a tree,
He set him down by the fountain-side,
The langour of Sir Lamorak,
The great complaint with which he cried,
Were such, the King he could not see.

And this the cross of his complaint,
"Oh, queen of Orkney, King Lot's wife,"
Cried aloud Sir Lamorak,—
"Now for thy love's sake, all that life
Which waxed in me, doth wane and faint !"

“Fair knight,” said Mark, “tell me thy name,
“Complain more piteous, no knight could!” . . .

But at that voice, Sir Lamorak
Remembering Tristan—Belle Isoud—
Forgot his woe in King Mark’s shame.

“Of coward knights, the king and chief
King Mark is known, that Sir Tristan
Has put to shame!” cried Lamorak,
“*To shame!*” the stream cried as it ran;
“*TO SHAME!*” cried out the forest leaf.

THE WISDOM OF KING SOLOMON

"This Solomon had an evil wife, where-
through he wend that there had been no good
woman, and so he despised them in his books."

OH Solomon, King Solomon,
He knew the secret of each tree,
The hidden virtue of each stone,
Of every herb the mystery :
He knew each course the stars do run.

But an evil wife had Solomon,
Wherethrough he wend that all were so,
And there could be no nobler one :
And he contemned them, thro' and thro',
And in his books made light thereon.

II

Then Heav'n found voice in Solomon :
"If one is evil, one shall be
Before thy lineage be run,
Shall bring men more felicity,
Far, than the evil thine has done !"

24 THE WISDOM OF KING SOLOMON

When this voice came to Solomon,
He held himself a fool. He said,
"By woman shall our Heav'n be won!
A man shall come, shall be a maid,
Blood of my blood, and Mary's son."

THE SERMON OF THE GENTLEWOMAN
THE WHICH WAS SISTER TO SIR
PERCIVALE; SHEWING TO SIR
GALAHAD THE VIRTUE OF THE
SWORD :

“By my faith,” said Galahad, “I would draw this sword out of the sheath, but the offending is so great, that I shall not set my hand thereto.”

OF divers fashions was the sword :

The pommel of the onyx stone :

To dress the haft great beasts had died

That break the wood and the breast the tide :

And one Euphrates' flood doth ride

And one doth hide in Calidon.

Great beasts did give their strength to it,

And give the curve of their breast-bone :

And one the Fiend hath in fee,

The serpent wound around that tree

(Whose fruit wrought Eve's calamity)

That midmost grows in Calidon.

26 SERMON OF THE GENTLEWOMAN

The other, men call Ertanax :

A fish, a four-legg'd fish, he is :

They call him so, for his bone is good :

He cunningly doth choose his food,

Three fathom deep amid the mud,

That drinks the flood of Euphrates.

His bones be of such manner of kind,

That whoso handleth them forthright,

Shall never weary, nor never sorrow ;

Nor lose his heart, nor fear the morrow,

Nor yester-night ;—but from them borrow

High courage, honour, peerless might.

Of divers colours was the sword :

The blade's left side was red as blood :

And letters, black as coal, engross't,—

“ He that shall take, to praise me most,

Shall find me fail, and at his cost,

Lose all his trust, and hardihood ! ”

But on the scabbard of serpent's skin,

Letters of gold and silver inlaid :

“ By the body of him, that should me bear,

If he wield me truly as never were,

He shall never be shamed, but surely fare

An my girdle be girt with a virgin maid.”

SERMON OF THE GENTLEWOMAN 27

Yea, divers virtue was in the sword

And in the scabbard of serpent's skin :

Take heed then : think of King Hurlame

That thought to wear it and died in shame :

Take heed now, knight, of your fair fame ;

For Grace misused is Deadly Sin !

THE DOLOROUS STROKE

"For sithen increased neither corn nor grass, nor well nigh no fruit, nor in the water was no fish: wherefore men call it the lands of the two marches, the waste land, for that Dolorous Stroke."

I

It befell in the realm of Logris,
What time was deadly war,
That King Hurlame the Saracen
Wrought hard on King Labor.

II

He drew his sword for the Dolorous Stroke
Cleft thro' King Labor's helm:
Great pestilence did come therefor,—
Yea, deadly hurt to Logris' realm.

III

No grass, no corn, grew in the field;
No harvest gave it mirth.
Men called those lands, for the Dolorous
Stroke,
The waste land of the earth.

THE LAY OF SURLUSE

I

Now Launcelot and La Cote Male Taile,
Which one of you will choose
To take the three bridges and break the three gates
That guard the fair land of Surluse?

"Sir Launcelot," says La Cote Male Taile,
"Let me fare to win or fall!
If I speed, it is gain; if I die, say the same;
Ye shall win where I fail,—that is all!"

"Nay, I am loth!" cries Launcelot:
"This passage that you should pass!"
But La Cote Male Taile, for all else he should say,
Let break a great pace on the grass.

II

Sir Plein de Force, Sir Plein d'Amour!
Keep well the first bridge, or give way:
Here comes a young knight with his coat cut awry
But his spear is long as the day.

The tennon'd planks rock as they ride, knight and
horse,

Like a ship under pluck of full sail :
But there's one hath a stain far too deep for the rain
From the blood of La Cote Male Taile.

Yet whether they ride or their horses avoid,
He hath meddled, and they are down :
Sir Plein de Force and Sir Plein d'Amour
Ye have lost the long pont of the town.

III

"Now, what is to do?" said La Cote Male Taile,
"But try the next bridge an I may :
Their brother, like fate, sits full-arm'd at the gate,—
Plenorius,—far greater than they!"

They two knights jousted, they two knights thrust,
Till the wind shook Surluse town :
But so be-bled was La Cote Male Taile,
Plenorius hath gat him down.

Yes, what for-wounded was Cote Male Taile,
What for-bled, he might not stand :
But Plenorius was as noble a lord
As ever took sword in his hand.

"Dismay ye not, you fair young knight!
For, had you been fresh like me,
I had not endured, as ye have done:
Now the best that I have be for thee!"

He has carried him to his bed-chamber:
"Yet haste!" was the hurt man's cry:
"There's another knight waits at the bridge,
And another manner knight than I."

"Oh, what is his name?" said Plenorius,
"That shall ye not know for me!"
But he heard a horse neigh, and a parlous voice
say—
"Sir knight, I would meddle with thee."

IV

"Art there, sweetheart," cried Plenorius:
"Ay, Surluse!" Sir Launcelot cried:
And step by step Sir Launcelot gained
The bridge at the Surluse side.

"Nay, leave your horse!" said Plenorius.
They avoid; Ha! the red knight's down:
The second long bridge hath Sir Launcelot gat,
And the second strong gate of the town.

"Now what is to do?" Sir Launcelot said :

"Try the third town-bridge on the tide!"
There Pillounes,—Pellandris,—Pellogris,
Plenorius' three brothers abide.

"Tis one spear to three men, but that spear hath a
demon ;

They are faint,—yea, ahorse or afoot :
The third gate to the town hath Sir Launcelot down,
And La Cote Male Taile he hath out.

v

"Now, thanks to thee, La Cote Male Taile,
For this meddle," cried Launcelot :

"We have gat the three bridges and passed the
three gates ;
All is thine that Plenorius aught!"

"Nay, thanks to thee, Sir Launcelot,—
I am saved," said La Cote Male Taile,

"But I pray thee pardon Plenorius,
Ere yet all thy kindness fail!"

"Plenorius gave my life to me,—
Upon the bridge. As time is short :
Let him keep his five lands, and knightly kiss hands
Next Pentecost at the Haut King's Court."

"At Pentecost," said Sir Launcelot,

"Plenorius, sure as the Table's round :

And sure as one siege is voided there,

One siege for thee shall be found !"

THE WONDER-DREAM

“ Of thys bataille were to telle,—
How Knightis undyr sadels felle,—
And stedys that were bold and snelle
Amonge hem waden in the blode
Before the tyme of even belle.”

THE Red King with the Hundred Knights,
A wonder-dream he dreamed
And thro' and thro' it blew the wind ;
And a wicked wind it seemed :
(*In his dream in the forest of Bedegraine, soon after
All-hallowmass Eve.*)

It blew upon the turret-tops,
And brought them tumbling down ;
It overset the Castle-keep ;
As low it laid the town :
(*In his dream in the forest of Bedegraine, soon after
All-hallowmass Eve.*)

And then a black rain fell in flood

And washed them all away :

But every drop the Red King dreamed,

Was a drop of blood next day :

*(As he lay in the forest of Bedegraine, soon after
All-hallowmass Eve.)*

THE SONG OF THE FOUR KNIGHTS

From "Gwenevere" a Lyric Play.

Merlin. But tell me now, how went this fight
Of Camlan field?" . . .

I

The First Knight.

One star was bright,—the cold dawn-star !
I saw a thousand lift the spear
In Modred's camp, to end the night,
As grey, we rode in the morning light.

II

The Second Knight.

The King rode with us,—and his head
Was grown grey too, we saw and said :
When he cried Halt ! on Camlan Hill
The dawn-star pale above him still.

III

The Third Knight.

His face too, grey beneath his helm :
Then : "For the Table and the Realm
Ride now !" he cried, and on we flowed
Each spear athirst for Modred's blood.

IV

The Fourth Knight.

But Modred met us, spear for spear.
Was he afraid? He showed no fear:
When Arthur riding, shining, thrust
The death-spear through him, to the dust.

V

"Kneel now, Haut King!" he cried, "and save
My soul the travail it shall have,
Were this not told of my remorse!"
And Arthur lighted off his horse.

VI

The First Knight.

Ah Snake! he crept upon the shaft
Could not be drawn: and dying, laught,
And with his sword struck at the head
Bent there to hear what thing he said.

VII

The Third Knight.

So Modred died,—a traitor still,
Up to the end, by Camlan Hill!
And as we bore the King away,—
On Modred's lips the death-laugh lay.

38 THE SONG OF THE FOUR KNIGHTS

VIII

The Four Knights.

Now, of the Flower of Camelot,—
Knights, Arthur loved, and Launcelot,
What is there left but stricken men
That bear the Haut King home again.

THE QUEST OF THE GRAIL: ON THE EVE

"And then the king and all estates went
home unto Camelot, and so went to evensong
to the great minster. And so after upon
that to supper."

I

"BEFORE you take this Quest," (he said), "in order
set,—
Each knight around the Table,—come, sup with
me yet ;
Come, keep the feast, that after us men never
shall forget ! "

II

Now, round the Table seated, each tall knight in
his place,—
Hears noises like to thunder, and sees a light
whose rays
Make shine his fellows by him, with brows more
bright than day's.

III

Not one could speak, for wonder. Then lo,
 within the hall
 Wrapt round with snow-white samite, the
 blessed Sancgreal
 And sweetest savours filled the board; and meat
 and drink for all.

IV

The mystic Vessel like a gleam went by: it could
 not stay:
 And the knights all fell to feasting, and the
 vision passed away,
 That all shall quest, but few shall find, until the
 earth's last day.

V

And then they fell to babbling, their hands upon
 their knees,
 And babbled of the morrow, and all the joy there is
 For them that quest, and ride the lands, and cross
 the winter seas.

VI

But the tears fell down King Arthur's cheeks,
 as he sate with his men:
 "Ye have set me in great sorrow," said Arthur to
 them then:
 "For oh, I doubt, my fellowship, shall meet no
 more again!"

THE CITY OF SARRAS

"I require you that ye bury me not in this country, but as soon as I am dead put me in a boat at the next haven, . . . and as soon as ye three come to the city of Sarras, there to achieve the Holy Grail, . . . there bury me in the spiritual place."

I

OH, have you not heard of Sir Galahad,
Sir Bors and Sir Percival,—
How they came to the Castle of Carbonek,—
On the Quest of the Sancgreal?

II

They sate at King Pelles' table,—
And they saw a Spear that bled
Three drops of blood most marvellous,—
And a marvellous sweet voice said,—

III

"Sir Galahad,—Sir Galahad!
Sir Bors, and Sir Percival!"—
And all three saw a shining form
By the cup of the Sancgreal.

IV

"This is Joseph of Arimathea,"
It said, "The which had grace ;
Which was saved in the City of Sarras
In the Spiritual Place !"

V

They grew adread to see the form
Of one dead, three hundred year !
But Joseph said, " A man like you,
Look on me,—have no fear ! "

VI

Then they saw two angels stand there,
Wax candles in their hand :
And Joseph of Arimathea
Between that twain did stand.

VII

" Now," said he, " servants of Jesu Christ
All three, you shall be fed
Afore this table with meats, more sweet
Than any knight ate," he said :
But when he had said it, he vanished away,
And the greater grew their dread.

VIII

Then came One from the Holy Grail,—
They saw his blood ; they knew the Light!
My knights, he said, my true children :
You shall taste of the Grail this night.

IX

Straightway Sir Galahad kneeled down,—
Sir Bors, and Sir Percival :
And they humbly received their Saviour
And partook of the Sancgreal.

X

Too sweet for earth its savour was ;—
Too marvellous to be told
Was the Mystery, and beyond man's sight
What the three knights saw unroll'd.

XI

This night, said he, you have seen much :
But after Night, the Day ;
And here in the realm of Logris
The Sancgreal cannot stay.

XII

You have seen this night your souls' desire ;
But there waits a Mystery
More strange, my knights, than you can think
Till to Sarras you sail the sea,—

XIII

Till you come where Joseph of Arimathea
Stood with me, face to face ;—
Till you stand in the City of Sarras,
In the Spiritual Place.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND THE SANGREAL

“ Car il ¹ n’or à nul pech’eour
Ne compaignie ne amour.”

He found a chamber where the door was shut,
And thereto set his hand to open it;
And mightily he tried, and still might not:
And then he heard a voice which sang so sweet,
It seemed none earthly thing that he heard sing,
“ Honour and joy be given
To the High King of Heaven! ”

It seemed none earthly thing that sung therein,
So sweet the voice, it near had made him greet,—
For well he knew his body, stained with sin,
Was for that mystic chamber all unmeet,
Wherein those voices rang, yes, choired and sang;
“ Honour and joy be given
To the High King of Heaven! ”

¹ i.e. le Gréail.”

46 SIR LAUNCELOT & THE SANGREAL

For well he knew that there the Sangreal
Upon the board was set for sinless souls,
While the three rays shone sidelong down the
wall ;

While he without did kneel with many a stain,
And there to that hid noise he joined his voice,
“Pity and grace be given,
To me, lost child of Heaven !”

With that he saw the chamber door unclose,
And out there shone a clearness and a light
As all the torches in the world that house
Had lighted and been borne there burning bright
About the Sangreal, while sang they all,
“Honour and joy be given,
To the sweet lord of Heaven !”

Oh, much he marvelled, and would enter in,
And cried, “Fair Father Jesu” in his need,
Remembering then men’s woe and mortal sin
For which the Christ upon the Cross did bleed,—
Yes, crying still that prayer, he entered there,—
“Pity and grace be given
To me, poor knight of Heaven !”

Right so he entered, where the Sangreal
Did shine to greet him ; but a gust of fire,
And a grim smoke, there smote and made him fall ;
It took his body's might, and all desire ;
He had no voice nor will, though they sang still,
 "Honour and joy be given,
 To the High King of Heaven !"

Then many hands did raise and bear him out,
And there all night he lay, till morning time ;
And many a day like dead lay Launcelot,
He heard no bell at matin or at prime :
Nathless he deem'd did sing, none earthly thing,
 "Honour and joy be given
 To the High King of Heaven !"

Then came a dayspring and a fair white dawn,
And he rose up, yet did not rise the same :
For all the bitterness and pain were gone :
For he who sinn'd the sin had borne the shame,
And seen the Sangreal, and heard them call,
 "Honour and joy be given
 To the High King of Heaven !"

* * * * *

48 SIR LAUNCELOT & THE SANGREAL

Oh now, frail sons of earth, who fell in sin ;
Learn from the piteous deed of this dread knight,
Beat at the door, and cry, and enter in,
And you shall win the Grail, and see the Light,
Yes, like none earthly thing, shall hear them sing,
“Honour and joy be given
To the High King of Heaven !”

THE LAST SLEEP OF SIR LAUNCELOT

“Behold also this mighty champion,
Launcelot, peerless of knighthood, . . . that
sometime was so terrible.”

STILL asleep, and fast asleep,
The hermit-bishop lay,
And fell upon a great laughter
An hour before the day.

Therewith his fellowship arose,
And asked what ailed him then?
“Alas!” said he, “such joy was mine
As shall not be again,

“Here was Sir Launcelot with me,
And angels too, far more
Than there be men, that heav’d him up
To heaven’s open door!”

“Vexing of dreams, it is but dreams,”
Said Bors. The bishop said,
“Yet go to Launcelot’s bedside!”
They go; they find him dead.

50 LAST SLEEP OF SIR LAUNCELOT

Still asleep, and fast asleep,
 Oh, sweet the smile he wore !
Sir Launcelot lay fast asleep,
 To waken never more.

Yes, there he lay, and smiled in sleep ;
 And a sweetest savour rose :
But greater dolour none has heard,
 Than the dole within that house.

* * *

Next day, the mass of requiem sung,
 They lift for him his sword.
The same bier that bare Gwenevere,
 Bare him to Joyous Garde.

And still asleep, and fast asleep,
 His visage open laid,
Within the quire of Joyous Garde
 Sir Launcelot lies dead.

THE LAMENT OF SIR ECTOR DE MARIS

I

THRO' waste and steep, this seven year
Sir Ector seeks Sir Launcelot,
His flower of knights, his brother dear.

From Calabre to Gwent, he sought ;
Last home to Joyous Garde, he hight
By roads that once Sir Launcelot brought.

II

What lights are they that burn all night,
Within the quire of Joyous Garde?
Sir Ector draws rein at the sight.

What songs are they to heaven's Lord?
What singing men, that sing and pause?
Sir Ector doffs his helm and sword.

They sing no song of "Deo Laus":
Sir Ector de Maris knows them not:
Yet, well they know his thrice-scarr'd brows.

"There lies thy brother, Launcelot,"
 Sir Bors says, standing by the bier,
 "That thou this seven year hath sought!"

Through waste and steep, this seven year,
 He sought; and now he swoons to see
 That face he sought lie on the bier.

The kneeling knights rise silently:
 They bear him forth to the cool night-air
 The summer night drinks from the sea.

III

When Ector woke, what anguish there
 He made, what pity in him wrought:
 His cries were more than heart can bear.

"Oh Launcelot, oh Launcelot,
 Of Christian knights, the flower and head,
 And there thou liest, Sir Launcelot.

"I will dare say," Sir Ector said,
 "Of all men thou wert courtliest,
 And the truest knight ever love bested.

“ Of a sinful man, thou wert the best,
That ever loved ; and of all, did ride
The lists full-arm'd, the goodliest.

“ And thou were first in the battle-tide
To meet the spears ; yet, the gentlest man
That sate in hall by the ladies' side.

“ And thou wert always the meekest one
That served thy lord in Camelot :
And the sternest knight, since wars began,

“ Put spear in rest, or ever fought
With thy mortal foe : and there, how low,
How low, thou liest, Sir Launcelot ! ”

* * *

The sorrow then, no man can know :
Weeping, complaining, without end,
For the noblest knight, the truest friend,
That ever into the grave did go.

TIMOR MORTIS

"The thing that I feared is fallen upon me."

WHEN deadly flesh, oh knight, shall see
The spiritual things,
The samite cloth, the Mystery,
The long street where the wings
Of eagles are the minstrelsy,
And winnow death, like dust away
Upon a windy day.

Then, if thine arm, like Galahad,
And thy heart tremble too,
Heave up, oh knight, thy hands, full glad
To know the death he knew,
The samite drawn, the Grail unclad
Past Logris and beyond the sea
That sails to Ar'mathie.

There, healed and solaced by the Grail,
Thy wounds shall hurt not so :

But He, that Knight whom men did nail
Upon the tree shall show
Those wounds they made, that brow left pale
By death, which call and bid thee come
Safe, oh knight errant, home.

THE SONG OF THE SEVEN CANDLES

I

SEVEN Candles round my bed,
 (To the damsels, to the damsels)
Bring the salt and bring the bread !
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

II

Then the curtains close *(she said*
 To the damsels, to the damsels)
Tell him Queen Gwenhwyfar's dead ;
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

III

Tell cruel Kai, Gwenhwyfar's pride
 (To the damsels, to the damsels)
Like a Queen's waxed as she died :
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

IV

Yet sadly, too, her fates led on
 (To the damsels, to the damsels)
To the far coasts of Avalon :
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

V

Tell cruel Kai, with small content,
 (To the damsels, to the damsels)
She left the beechen leaves of Gwent ;
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

VI

Yet making haste for pride *(she said*
 To the damsels, to the damsels)
Gwenhwyfar died ere she was dead :
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

VII

Now from her wake let Kai begone
 (To the damsels, to the damsels)
To the Haut King in Caledon :
 (To her damsels, said the Queen.)

58 SONG OF THE SEVEN CANDLES

VIII

But first, before he leave, (*she said*
To the damsels, to the damsels)
Offer him the salt and bread :
(*To her damsels, said the Queen.*)

IX

If he will eat my sins for me
(*To the damsels, to the damsels*)
Kai's soul is lost and mine goes free :
(*To her damsels, said the Queen.*)

X

My soul is mine in Avalon,
(*To the damsels, to the damsels*)
But Kai's must war in Caledon :
(*To her damsels, said the Queen.*)

XI

Seven passions, seven wars,
(*To the damsels, to the damsels*)
Seven candles, seven stars,
(*To her damsels, said the Queen.*)

XII

Seven candles round the bed

(To the damsels, to the damsels)

Bring the salt and bring the bread!

*(To her damsels, said Gwenbwyfar,
Laughed and wept and cried the Queen.)*

THE LAY THAT HAD NO END

“Puis comence le iengleur Bloys
Deslaiaux de mort du roy :
Mais pourquoi pourquoi on dit,
Sanz fin james laisser çï.”

“Then begins the jongleur of Blois his lays
of the King's death. But one keeps saying,
'Why, why?' all the while: and this song
is left for ever without an end.”

I

“THE sun sank red, the moon as red
As blood did rise o'er Caerbrë town;
The King,” he sang. “*But Bloys*,” I said,
“*Come tell me where is Caerbrë town?*”

II

“The Haut King, red with blood, returned
From Barendown's fire, and came therein
To die,” he sang. “*What in him burned,*
Dark Mordred's death? or Gwenevere's sin?”

III

"They buried in his blood the dead ;
But One bore water there to save
The King," he sang. "*But Bloys,*" I said,
"*Where lies indeed the Haut King's grave ?*"

THE UNFINISHED BOOK OF BLEISE

ALL the battles that were won
Merlin bade his master, Bleise,
Put on parchment. Caerleon,—
Blazoned round with crimson rays
Was that page of night and sun :
And the siege of Ile Maleise,—
Black and purple, marching on.
But when he wrote the fierce assays
The Haut King had in Caledon,
The letters fought : the rampant A's,
The S's all awry—each one
Recall'd the burning tower of Pase,
Wherein the knights in agony spun.
For so the letters twirl'd, till Bleise
Left Merlin's book of wars undone.
Yet fame hath still her splendid ways :
Camlan,—Cardoile,—Caerleon—
Still shall keep the Haut King's praise
Sounding to the end of days.

ARTHUR'S GRAVE

THE EPITAPH

SOME men do say King Arthur is not dead,
But by the will of our Lord Jesu sleeps,
Yet to awake, deathless, and reassure us :
And therefore is it, that grave where he is laid
This legend hath, that still his kingdom keeps :
Arthurus Rex Quondam, Rexque Futurus.

THE CASTLE SPEAKS

I

My knights in helm and jesseraunt,
That hurled the ladder from the wall,
Then watched it fall;
My men that heard the trumpet taunt,
What dust has closed your high accompt.

II

And you, young maids, who rustled by
To kneel within my embrasure,
And there inure
Your hearts to steel as death drew nigh,
What dust is that where you do lie?

III

And where's the sword of Hugh the Good
And where's the heart of Fitzhamon
Who to the bone
Stript Jestyn,—yes, of every rood?
What dust has drunk up Eynon's blood?

IV

Only this mist and white half-moon
That fill the harvest-fields again
With sheaves like men,
Can give them now, as night draws on,
A homeless resurrection.

V

I was their House of Majesty :
They were my children,—guest and host :
And they are dust :
Look out, my stones that last, and see
Where in the mist their souls may be ?

THE SONG OF THE APPLE

“APPLE, red apple,
Growing on the bough,
What is your solace
The while you do grow?”

*This for my solace,
Growing in the leaf:
In the Garden of Eden,
I tempted Eve.*

“Apple, red apple,
Growing on the tree,
What was Eve thinking,
When she took of thee?”

*Thinking of nothing
But Adam was Eve.
But when she had eaten
She hid in the leaf.*

“ Apple, red apple,
The same that Eve knew,
What then shall ail me,
To take of thee too? ”

*Take now, and eat now,
Taste me, and see :
You shall know all the sorrow
Eve took from the tree.*

“ Apple, red apple——? ”
No more could she say.
The girl from the orchard
Went weeping away.

ST DAVID AND THE SORROWS

Now David goes to Solva field,
 To drink the early summer's peace,
 The oak his shield
Against the noontide fervencies.

The daisies are his wondering eyes,
 To see the holy unseen things
 Of earth and skies :
The ardent swallows are his wings.

“Green herbs,” he said, “to heal my mind ;
 The sky is my soul's firmament :
 And here I find
My heart its last terrene content.

“The living south-wind in the leaves
 Is like a lovely thought,
 That going grieves
To go ; but staying, stays unsought.”

* * * * *

ST DAVID AND THE SORROWS 69

But there's a footfall by the tree,
Soft as the wind's, though no wind's noise
So sad could be,
When in his ear breaks Sanau's voice.

She tells him of five bloody deaths :
Of Kynon, by the lime-kiln found.
Her deep-drawn breaths
Paint the red-scythe, the dreadful wound.

And of the mother near St Bride's,
With three babes murdered in their bed,
(She tells besides,)
The blood-stain on each innocent head.

The dreamer wakes. Ah, who shall keep
For even one white lovely hour
His heart asleep
When sorrows call, when Death has power ?

Now David leaves the Druid's tree,
And by her side from that green place
Goes silently,—
Not peace, but pity in his face.

70 ST DAVID AND THE SORROWS

The Sorrows call ; and David goes
Into the human world again
Of hopes and woes :
So must we all, both saints and men.

THE FLOWER MAIDEN

THEY could not find a mortal wife,
And made him one of flowers :
Her eyes they made of violets,
Wet with their morning showers.

They took the blossom of the oak,
The blossom of the broom,
The blossom of the meadowsweet,
To be her body's bloom.

But they forgot from mother-earth
To beg the kindling coal :
They made for him a wife of flowers,—
But they forgot the soul.

KERI'S DAUGHTER

I

ALONE I go a-hunting, when all their hunting's
done,
To follow Keri's daughter in the footsteps of the
sun.

She drowzes all the day thro', she wakens with
the moth ;
And shakes out her black tresses from their
crimson binding cloth.

Their beauty that she braided falls loose now to
her knees,
As she goes to her window, and wonders at the
trees.

Her eyes shine in the shadow, grown opal-like,
and change
Like pools that fill with starlight when other lights
grow strange.

Now on the stair, bare-footed, she stays to gird
her gown,
That it may let the briars be;—and lightly she
goes down.

What fate's on Keri's daughter, to wake when all
is done,
And follow where the sun went, but never see
the sun?

What fate's on me to follow along the fields of
night,
The feet of Keri's daughter, yet never cross her
sight?

II

The wind is her white brachet, to course the
wood with her,
Where the oak trees are tall, and the lone stars
lean near.

The oak leaves cannot keep her, her white hound
draws her on:
The livelong night, they range the night: until
the night is done.

I ride into the mid-wood, and wait. What fragrance
clings
Upon the dreaming fernleaf, and the muffled,
drowsy things.

Is that an owl upon the hill, or is it her white
hound,
To tell me I must leave the wood, and follow at
the sound?

But when we reach the hilltop, we hear them in
the wood ;
And when we turn, we turn too late : the moor-
land is her mood.

III

I have a horse of fire, bred by an ancient
groom ;
His hoofs are not of water, and he can ride to
doom.

But when he takes the hillside, where the twin
torrents pour :
I hear, far down the aber, her hound bay by the
shore.

I hold my breath with rapture, I ride to the salt
strand ;
The spotted waves, like leopards, run on the
yellow sand.

The seamews talk like children : the moon says,—
“ Here she gave
Her white feet to the water, her white hand to
the wave ! ”

But the sewmews talk together : “ The creature is
gone home,
Her feet bear thro' the rushes soft flakes of sandy
foam.”

I wheel about : the strand grows grey : the night
is nearly run :
And Keri's daughter flies for home long hours
before the sun.

IV

All night-things : stars, dark water, benighted oak
and fir,
The white moth and the brown moth,—they all
are friends to her.

The sleeping leaves dream of her, as she goes
thro' the grasses,
The flower asleep thinks her white feet are flowers
as she passes.

Now, on the windy hilltop, her hair like wafted
smoke,
Draws all the darkness after her, to be her
beauty's cloak.

I feel it brush upon my cheek, I grasp at my
delight ;
The morning-star looks cold on me, across the
tops of night.

It speaks of night beyond the night, and stars on
stars behind
The moon, that make a morning at midnight in
her mind.

I know the darkness as I ride is different to her
eyes,
That see in every sleeping leaf, a light, a ray to
rise.

And every leaf she brushes by, takes of her leave
to bloom,
The birch, the broody horn-beam, the star-dew
and the broom.

And if the frost come at his hour, for her each
crystal fine
Holds a white chamber in it, and a virgin lamp to
shine.

v

At day I ask the salmon, and the speechless birch
and fern,—
Which road, to overtake her, my horse and I must
turn.

I spur my horse, I tremble, as I go riding
on;
And track the mountain torrent: too late: I see
the dawn.

If she should see us ride behind,—or the sun sit
on his height.
Know, she would range no longer in her mysterious
night.

Then I should keep the white-limb'd girl within
my ordered house
And let her hunt no longer, with her black cloak
flying loose.

* * * * *

Oh, it is well to follow, but not to overtake,
The maiden in her mystery, for the white spirit's
sake.

But night bring back my hunting, for I would
rather ride
In vain for Keri's daughter, than win the world
beside.

GRANIA'S ROMANCE-BOOK

*"Not a leafe or blo's'm, nat a quiet beam of lighte,
but hath its musicks in her secret herte."*

[The Tale of Blauncheflour.]

I. THE ROSES OF KNOCKADOON

I

IN Knockadoon
There is a rose garden :
Long ago, late and soon,
Young Grania walked there :
In Knockadoon.

II

To Knockadoon rose garden,
Under the white moon,
Hoping its light would show you
A child still, not a woman,
You went,—I dreamt you went there,
Grania !—to Knockadoon.

In Knockadoon rose garden,
You walked, in ecstasy :
And each white rose you gathered
Under the blessed moonlight,
That freed the soul within it,—
A spirit, left its tree.

But the yellow rose stood singing,
And folded in its palms
Mysterious scrips of music,
Old immemorial music
Written on yellow parchment,
And Brigid's Irish psalms.

But the red rose, whose soul is
For pity and delight,
Most like the soul of woman,
Her beauty and her sorrow :
Looked black above the grass there,
Black, black in the moonlight.

III

In Knockadoon,
I know the roses knew you,
That sang St Brigid's tune :
And the white rose freed its fragrance
For you,—in Knockadoon.
But the Black Rose,
That changed her face,—
And let the white moon close
Her redness up : she told me
This, that Brigid knows.

In Knockadoon,
The Rose that you loved,
Grania, in the sun—under the moon ;
When you came back a woman,
Brooded, in Knockadoon.

IV

The roses, Grania,—dreamers !
Under the blessed moon
They have felt so much, they told me,—
For those that lived once with them
Shared so, dreamt so, spent so
Their souls, colour and fragrance :
They are not like other flowers :

It is many a year since you went so,—
Went in the moon of midsummer ;
But they sing, and they brood, and remember
You, Grania, in Knockadoon.

II. THE CHAMBER OF ECSTASY

WHEN you, at your white house,
Open the door,
Leaves, blown from many boughs,
Are on the floor.

When you, then, climb the stair
To your white room;
Grass-scented streams of air
Purge out the gloom.

Two windows, east and west,
Lend it white light:
One loves the morning best,
One looks for night.

One sees the morning march
The mountain tops:
One sees the twilight arch
The oaken copse.

And your white doves that are
 Warmed in your breast,
Out of each window far
 Fly, east and west.

III. MORNING LIGHT

THE light is woven about you,
 Yellow and purple and red,
All woven into a whiteness,
And gathered in elf-knot and crystal,
 Like the blossom the white-thorn shed.

The light is your garment about you
 As you go walking by
With your look of pity and brightness
By the dewdrops that glisten around you,
 I dream you are dropt from the sky.

The light is woven about you :
 Yellow and purple and red,
Enwoven into a whiteness ;
But the rarest rays, and the fairest,
 Make the halo for your head.

IV. THE WONDER OF THE WORLD

THE ROMANCE OF ARTEMISIA

WHEN Artemisia and Mausolos rode

Out of the Carian gate, their chariot wheels
O'ercame the world, till its great spaces flow'd
Like air away ; while on their horses' heels,
Like the one cloud of whitest fire
That brings the god again,
Their chariot hurl'd, to match their swift
desire ;
And so went quickly from those Carian
men.

It went away yet left a radiance there :
Love's perfect apparition cannot fade.
Their passionate chariot still upon the air
Hung like a cloud, and driven on, still staid,—
As if each chang'd and fading ray
Resumed its fervency.
Retook their splendour, while their train and
they
That gave it fire still rode on radiantly.

Oh, subtle fire : I never saw the South
Of Artemisia, never heard the cry
Of Carian men there, crying with the mouth
Of wonder on Mausolos, urging by
His high-neck'd horses. But the gleam
Of his great love and hers,
Caught in the marble cloud that dreams of
them,
Still gleams and lights those godlike
charioteers.

For Artemisia, when her dear lord died,
Drank his burnt ash, solv'd in a cup of wine,
And turned their chariot into stone, for pride
Of their undying Love, and cast a shrine,
The world's last wonder, on the air,
To tell in marble rhyme
What Artemisia and Mausolos were,
Who Death o'ersway, though dead, and
conquer Time.

Ill days, ill fates, I know, have rent the stone
And caught away its crest of loveliness ;
But Artemisia's heart goes beating on
In the hurt marble, as beneath the dress

THE WONDER OF THE WORLD 89

Of some sad maid the bosom heaves
The silk-like gossamer.
By that dire loss for which the lover grieves
Love's heart is known. And so it was
with her.

The thrust of Time can never bear away
Mausolos' majesty, nor break the heart
Of Artemisia. No, the dream shall stay,
Though marble perish—of eternal art,
Of Love,—of Love like theirs. And when
We stoop before dark fate,
Let us still turn, like those forgotten men,
To watch the Lovers leave the Carian
gate.

Still from the stone they breathe the ardent
breath
Of Love undying ; still their chariot, hurl'd
Into a South beyond the cast of Death,
Bears on their impassioned faith, to show the
world,
Beyond Time's wreck, the undying fire,—
And give us, if we be
Of pulse too weak, a splendour of desire
For more than goes with torn mortality.

This, the world's wonder, Artemisia gave :
Because she loved Mausolos deathlessly.
So come, all Lovers ! to Mausolos' grave,
And say,—“ All fades ; but Love the Mystery
Since spirits master Time, fares unafraid
To its supreme abode,
Past Fate, and Night, and Death the darker
shade,—
As Artemisia and Mausolos rode ! ”

V. TO GRANIA IN IRELAND

THERE is an island in your eyes,
Lies very far from me :
It broods among its seas and skies,
Blue as the woodbells that surprise
The unfledged April tree.

THERE is the Isle of Apple-trees,
The ship must sink to reach :
Its fragrance, blown across the seas,
Tells of the light bright mysteries,
The bloom above the beach.

And in its light and deep delight,
Shining and dreaming on,—
Each flower finds its beam, each night
Its morning star, and exquisite
Grey pearl of dawn.

The seaman hears the waves that break,
And sees the apple-bloom :
Ah, dare he think that for his sake
The island-wave, the blossom, ache
With sorrow for his doom ?

Because of sorrow, Paradise
 Stepped to a nearer star :
The far-off island in your eyes,
Too lonely in its deeps and skies,
 Is nearer by a tear.

VI. MAIDEN-WOOD

*(A woman grown, goes Grania now
Again to Maiden-wood ;
And stands as silent in its heart
As a nun in Holy Rood.)*

She said, " I am made silent,
By this mysterious wood ;—
There are brown, beneath the green, leaves
And they were once the green leaves :
And the brown leaves fill my mood."

And then I heard her weep there,
Within the Maiden-wood ;
For she saw how all the green leaves,
Must very soon be brown leaves,
And end their maidenhood !

And then I heard her laugh there,
Within the Maiden-wood ;
For the wind caressed the brown leaves,
The green leaves bowed to the brown leaves
And the brown leaves understood.

VII. L'ENVOI:

THE MIRROR OF ROMANCE

I KNOW this Irish wind, by every cry,
Three years ago, it cried on Garadice,
Waving green boughs to us as we sailed by
And looked to see the lawns of Paradise
Deep in mid-lake : but only met the eyes
Of our twin-selves, that saw mysteriously
In our blown boat and blowing wind far more than
we could see.

Had we known, then, all our twin-creatures there
Knew,—known all our imminent boat bore
on,
Balanced upon the flood and flowing air—
We must have turned, afraid as we wore on,
Fearing the course that wild wind had fore-
gone :
We did not know, as we sailed, gazing
down,
And only saw your eyes gaze up, your eager hair
wind-blown ?

This day the wind may blow as it did then ;
But I am older ; you are altered too,
A change not felt by mighty winds, but men
And women, who have loved and faltered too
Looking for heav'n, to find as they must do
Only themselves, their souls and their own
day,
Mirrored in waters of romance, a thousand years
away.

In those dire years, day after day, when dread
Stood at the door, you know how dreading
still
Worse days to come, I looked at life, then read,
In books of old romance, and reading still
Of Caerleon town, Sarras and Merlin's Hill,
I drew from Arthur's wound a dreadful
spear,
And saw your sad eyes find themselves in those of
Gwenevere.

And all that know To-day in Yesterday,
And know men's masks may change,—but never
men

Will find the heart beat fast here in each lay,
Of them that loved, and lived forever then,
Twin-souls that look with our own eyes again
Out of the water of that faerie lake,
That mirrors earth and heav'n-on-earth for love
and human sake.

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